

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3618

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IS, UR

SUBJECT: ISRAELI MEDIA REACTION TO REPORT OF REJECTION OF AMBASSADOR
TOON AS ENVOY TO MOSCOW

1. ISRAELI PRESS AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA HAVE DEVOTED A GOOD DEAL OF
ATTENTION TO MARVIN KALB STORY THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAD
REJECTED PRESIDENT FORD'S NOMINATION OF AMBASSADOR TOON
AS THE NEXT AMERICAN AMBASSADOR TO THE SOVIET UNION.
HERE ARE REPORTS AS THEY APPEARED:

2. OCTOBER 31. ISRAELI RADIO SAID ON ITS 0700 NEWS
THAT "THE SOVIETSHAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR REJECTION OF THE
PROPOSAL TO APPOINT MALCOLM TOON AS THE U.S. AMBASSADOR
TO MOSCOW. IT IS ASSUMED IN WASHINGTON THAT THE SOVIET
UNION HAS DECIDED THIS BECAUSE IT CONSIDERS MALCOLM TOON
AN INFLEXIBLE MAN FROM THE DAYS WHEN HE WAS AMBASSADOR
IN YUGOSLAVIA." JERUSALEM POST'S BLITZER (WASHINGTON) SAYS STORY
IS CBS'S. BLITZER ADDS THAT "CBS DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT
MARVIN KALB CALLED THE SOVIET JECISION 'UNPRECEDENTED'
AND SAID IT INDICATED THE THE SOVIET-U.S. DETENTE IS
IN TROUBLE." PAPER CONCLUDES BY NOTING THAT "EARLIER
THIS MONTH (IT) REPORTED THE USSR WAS DELAYING THE
APPOINTMENT OF TOON, A WELL KNOWN HARDLINER IN SOVIET
AFFAIRS, PENDING THE OUTCOME OF U.S. ELECTIONSM"

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DAVAR'S BARNEA (WASHINGTON) CARRIES KALB'S STORY, NOTES

THAT RUSSIAN REJECTION "IS NOT FINAL." YEDIOT'S KIVITY (WASHINGTON) PROVIDES A MORE ELABORATE COMMENTARY ON CBS' STORY. KIVITY SAYS THAT "THE USSR TOLD PRESIDENT FORD, UNOFFICIALLY BUT IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS, THAT IT REJECTS HIS PROPOSAL TO APPOINT MALCOLM TOON TO THE POST OF U.S. AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW. MOSCOW'S STEP IS REGARDED IN WASHINGTON AS UNPRECEDENTED AND AS A SLAP IN PRESIDENT FORD'S FACE. SINCE 1933 IT HAS BEEN CUSTOMARY TO THINK THAT THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN THE SOVIET CAPITAL IS THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL ENVOY, AND THE SOVIETS HAVE NEVER REJECTED SUCH AN APPOINTMENT. EXPERTS IN WASHINGTON BELIEVE THAT THE SOVIETS DO NOT WANT MALCOLM TOON BECAUSE OF HIS OVERT ANTI-SOVIET POSITIONS. EVEN WHILE HE WAS SERVING IN YUGOSLAVIA AND IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA, WASHINGTON SOURCES SAY, MALCOLM TOON USED TO ASSERT HIS VIEWS CONDEMNING THE SOVIET REGIME, WHICH ANGERED THE KREMLIN CONSIDERABLY. NOW THEY CONSIDER HIM UNFIT TO BE AN AMBASSADOR. SINCE THE SOVIET REJECTION HAS STILL NOT BEEN DELIVERED THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS, HIS PROSPECTS TO RECEIVE THE OFFICE ARE AS YET NOT WHOLLY NULLIFIED. IT SEEMS THAT THE SOVIETS ARE NOW WAITING FOR THE U.S. ELECTION RESULTS ON TUESDAY. IF JIMMY CARTER IS ELECTED, TOON'S CANDIDACY WILL FALL ANYHOW, SINCE THE PRESIDENT WILL WANT TO SEND A MAN OF HIS OWN TO MOSCOW. IF FORD IS ELECTED, MOSCOW WILL WAIT FOR A WHILE, IN WHAT IS BEING DESCRIBED AS A 'SAR OF NERVES.' IF FORD IS ADAMANT, THE RUSSIANS WILL ACCEPT TOON, EXPLAINING THEY DO SO UNWILLINGLY. HOWEVER, THEY WILL MAKE A POINT OF CIRCUMVENTING THE NEW AMBASSADOR, SO AS TO 'NEUTRALIZE' HIM AND INSURE A CHANGE OF AMBASSADORS IN A RELATIVELY SHORT TIME."

3.NOVEMBER 1. ISRAELI RADIO CARRIED A BROADCAST CONVERSATION BETWEEN CORRESPONDENT ESHEL AND DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY EAGLEBURGER (THE GIST OF WHICH WAS REPORTED IN THE PREVIOUS NIGHT'S 2100 NEWS CAST). RADIO SAID THAT "THE U.S. EMBASSY IN ISRAEL DOES NOT YET KNOW WHETHER MALCOLM TOON WILL BE APPOINTED TO THE POST OF U.S. AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW. WASHINGTON HAS NOT YET GIVEN ITS EMBASSY IN ISRAEL AN ANSWER TO THIS QUESTION, UNCLASSIFIED

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BUT OUR CORRESPONDENT DAN ESHEL, WHO TALKED ON THE PHONE LAST NIGHT WITH DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE LARRY EAGLEBURGER, HEARD HIM DESCRIBE A DIFFERENT SITUATION CONCERNING THE MALCOLM TOON APPOINTMENT AS AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW: ESHEL SAID HE WAS TOLD BY EAGLEBURGER THAT IT IS NOT CUSTOMARY TO RELEASE INFORMATION ABOUT PROPOSED AMBASSADORIAL APPOINTMENTS BEFORE OUR PROPOSALS ARE ACCEPTED BY THE OTHER PARTY; HOWEVER, WITH THESE

LIMITATIONS IN MIND, I CAN TELL YOU SOMETHING, NEVERTHE-
LESS. EAGLEBURGER SAID: "IT IS NOT CORRECT THAT WE
HAVE RECEIVED WORD FROM THE SOVIETS REJECTING THE REQUEST
FOR AGREEMENT FOR AMBASSADOR TOON." ESHEL ASKED WHETHER
HE WAS READY TO DENY THE KALB STORY. EAGLEBURGER REPLIED:
"YES." ESHEL: THIS IMPLIES THAT EVEN UNOFFICIAL
SIGNALS HAVE NOT BEEN SENT BY THE SOVIET UNION.
EAGLEBURGER: MATTERS STAND WHERE THEY STOOD 24 HOURS OR
48 HOURS OR 2 WEEKS AGO. JERUSALEM POST'S "DRY BONES"
CARTOON BY KIRSCHEN DEPICTS AND ISRAELI READING THE
NEWSPAPER AND GETTING MAD AT "THOSE DIRTY RUSSIAN ANTI-
SEMITES" FOR HAVING REJECTED TOON. WHEN REMINDED THAT
"TOON ISN'T JEWISH," THE ISRAELI RETORTS: "HE'D BE
COMING FROM ISRAEL, WOULDN'T HE?" YEDIOT'S CHIEF EDITOR
REPEATS CARTOON'S MESSAGE ON THE EDITORIAL PAGE.
ACCORDING TO THAT PAPER'S HERZL ROSENBLUM, "AMBASSADOR TOON'S
HAWKISH ATTITUDE TOWARD MOSCOW IS NOT THE REASON FOR THE SOVIET
UNION'S REJECTION OF HIS CANDIDACY. FORMER U.S.
AMBASSADORS TO MOSCOW DID NOT ESPECIALLY SYMPATHIZE
WITH COMMUNISM, AND MOSCOW DID NOT OBJECT TO THEM,
KNOWING THAT EVERY AMBASSADOR CARRIES OUT HIS COUNTRY'S,
NOT HIS OWN, POLICY. MR TOON WAS REJECTED BECAUSE OF
HIS PRESENT POST. THE RUSSIANS DO NOT WISH TO GET AN
AMBASSADOR WHO HAS SERVED IN ISRAEL, A COUNTRY THEY HATE.
IF THEY DID, IT WOULD IMPLY THAT ISRAEL IS ON A PAR
WITH THE SOVIET UNION."
TOON

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